

## PRESS RELEASE – THE OBSERVATORY

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### EGYPT: 24 hours later no information on human rights defenders arrested

The international community must react urgently and strongly

**Paris-Geneva, February 4, 2011. Twenty-four hours after the arrest of at least 30 human rights defenders by the military police inside the building hosting the Hisham Mubarak Law Center and the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, there are no information regarding the whereabouts and physical integrity of those under arrest. The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture, deplores acts of intimidation and fears for the safety of human rights defenders.**

According to the latest information received, at least 30 human rights defenders who have been arrested at the Hisham Mubarak Law Center and the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights on February 3, 2011 in the early afternoon remain in military police custody. No one has been able to communicate nor to visit them, according to several sources. The group include members of the Hisham Mubarak Law Center, the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, in particular Messrs. **Ahmed Seif El Islam, Mohsen Besheer, and Mostafa El Hassan**, lawyers and Ms. **Mona El Masry**, researcher, at the Hisham Mubarak Law Center; Mr. **Daniel Williams**, researcher at Human Rights Watch, Ms. **Fatma Abada**, Mr. **Saeed Hadadi** and Mr. **Khaled Ali**, researchers at Amnesty International, and Mr. **Mohamed El Taher**, Ms. **Shahenda Abushadi**, Ms. **Nadine Abushadi**, and Ms. **Nada Sadek**. Others include people who volunteers at the Front to Defend Egypt Protestors, a committee created to provide legal humanitarian and moral support to demonstrators. The total number of human rights defenders arrested remains unknown to date.

In the evening of February 3, 2011, Mr. Amr Sallah, a researcher for the Cairo Institute for Human Rights, was also arrested by unidentified officials. His whereabouts remain also unknown.

According to local sources, today other human rights activists who provide support to demonstrators or who participate to the demonstrations have been arrested by the military police<sup>1</sup>.

The Observatory is deeply concerned for the security of members of civil society, particularly members of human rights NGOs, lawyers and journalists and urges the authorities to immediately release those who remain in detention and to refrain from any further attack, arrest or act of intimidation against them.

In addition, the Observatory calls upon the European Union, in particular the European Union High Representative of Foreign Affairs and Security Policies, to denounce this repression publicly and strongly and to all other States and intergovernmental institutions to reiterate their condemnation and continue to exert pressure on the authorities to ensure the release of all defenders arrested and to guarantee the safety of all Egyptian human rights defenders.

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<sup>1</sup> See Joint Press release of the Observatory and EMHRN, February 3, 2011, *Egypt: Human rights defenders under siege*.